

The Difference in Deaths

by James B. Goode

(For Danny McClees)

Let me die
 outside
 this sterile world
 somewhere far away
 from the hypnotizing rhythms
 Of machines
 hissing away my breath for me
 Let me die
 where I can feel death approaching
 and have my final speak
 Let me die
 with the comings and goings of
 children
 and grandchildren
 cousins
 and friends
 those who will hug and kiss
 and those
 who will stand awkwardly in the corner
 passing the brim of their hats through
 their bent fingers
 Let them step forward
 with last requests
 and bones to pick
 Let charity and forgiveness
 have a day
 I want to feel the stillness
 wash over me
 spinning around me
 like a cotton candy cocoon
 Let me see the light
 shaped into an angel
 doves gathered at the window
 hear the fiddle
 playing "I Am a Pilgrim"
 Let me close my eyes
 As the eternal quietness
 Of the snowy woodland
 closes in.